

### REMARKS

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's thorough examination of the present application as evidenced by the Office Action of July 31, 2007 (hereinafter "Office Action"). In response, Applicant has amended the Specification to correct the informalities cited on page 2 of the Office Action. With respect to the drawings, Applicant respectfully disagrees with the assertion in the Office Action on page 2 that FIGS. 1, 5A, and 5B should be labeled as prior art as these figures illustrate embodiments of the present invention. These figures illustrate embodiments of the present invention as described on pages 5 - 9. Applicant further submits that the prior art described in the Specification along with the cited reference do not disclose or suggest, at least, all of the recitations of the pending independent claims. Favorable reconsideration of all pending claims is respectfully requested for at least the reasons discussed hereafter.

#### **Independent Claims 1, 4, and 7 are Patentable**

Independent Claims 1, 4, and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over prior art cited in the Specification (APA) in view of U. S. Patent No. 6,781,076 to Takiguchi et al. (hereinafter "Takiguchi"). Independent Claim 1 is directed to a switch dome device for operating functions in electronic equipment. The device comprises a plurality of switch domes and an AND circuit and recites, in part:

...  
wherein outputs of adjacent switch domes are connected to inputs of the AND circuit and the switch dome device is responsive to **only** two adjacent ones of the plurality of switch domes actuated at a time for operating a function. (Emphasis added).

Independent Claims 4 and 7 include similar recitations. As explained on page 8, lines 20 and 21 of the Specification, no response is provided if one of the plurality of switch domes is actuated. A response is provided **only** if two adjacent ones of the plurality of switch domes are actuated at the same time according to the independent claims.

The Office Action acknowledges that the APA does not disclose the recited AND

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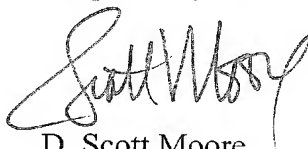
circuit, but alleges that Takiguchi provides the missing teachings at col. 12, lines 35 – 51. In sharp contrast to the recitations of independent Claims 1, 4, and 7, however, the passage cited from Takiguchi explains that an AND circuit may be used in a device with four switch elements such that eight functions can be selected corresponding to the actuation of the four switch elements individually and the actuation of adjacent pairs of the switch elements. (Takiguchi, col. 12, lines 38 – 43). Thus, Takiguchi teaches that a response is provided even if a single switch element is actuated, not only if two adjacent switch elements are actuated.

Accordingly, for at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submits that independent Claims 1, 4, and 7 are patentable over the cited references and that Claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, and 9 are patentable at least per the patentability of independent Claims 1, 4, and 7.

#### CONCLUSION

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the above-entitled application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (919) 854-1400.

Respectfully submitted,

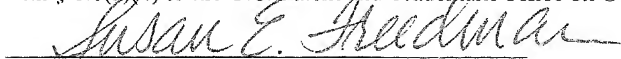


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#### CERTIFICATION OF TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted via the Office electronic filing system in accordance with § 1.6(a)(4) to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on October 31, 2007.

  
Susan E. Freedman

Date of Signature: October 31, 2007